

Message Text

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15

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00

SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SAJ-01 SAM-01 IO-11 CU-02

OMB-01 /078 W

----- 047632

O 100937Z JAN 76

FM USLO PEKING

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5008

INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY TOKYO IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW IMMEDIATE

CINCPAC IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L PEKING 0062

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT CH

SUBJECT: CHOU EN-LAI'S DEATH; PEKING ATMOSPHERICS

1. PEOPLE CONTINUE TO GO ABOUT THEIR BUSINESS ROUTINELY IN PEKING, BUT A NOTICEABLE PALL HAS DESCENDED OVER THE CITY. THE PHOTOGRAPHERS ARE GONE FROM TIEN AN MEN SQUARE TODAY AND THE SOLEM EXPRESSIONS ON THE FACES OF MOST PEOPLE ON THE STREETS, -AND THE ABSENCE OF EVEN AN OCCASIONAL SCENE OF JUCULAR BANTERING- SUGGESTS THE SORROW WE HAVE ENCOUNTERED OVER CHOU'S DEATH IN INDIVIDUAL CONVERSATIONS WITH CHINESE IS GENUINE AND WIDESPREAD. CHINESE EMPLOYEES, LANGUAGE INSTITUTE TEACHERS, HOSPITAL PERSONNEL, AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS (INCLUDING MFA PROTOCOL CHIEF CHU CHUAN-HSIEN) HAVE SHOWN DEEP GRIEF OR BROKEN OUT IN TEARS WHEN THE SUBJECT OF CHOU'S DEATH COMES UP IN CONVERSATION WITH USLO PERSONNEL. COMMENTS WE HAVE HEARD FROM CHINESE CONVEY A GENERAL FEELING OF EXTRAORDINARY LOSS TO CHINA CAUSED BY CHOU'S DEATH AND UNCERTAINTY AS TO CHINA'S FUTURE

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COURSE WITHOUT CHOU'S STEADYING HAND. WE DID NOT ENCOUNTER

ANYTHING LIKE THIS IMPACT FOLLOWING THE DEATHS OF TUNG PI-WU AND KANG SHENG LAST YEAR.

2. THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE FUNERAL ARE GOING FORWARD WITH AN OVERRIDING CONCERN FOR DIGNITY AND SOLEMNITY. THE FUNERAL COMMITTEE HAS ANNOUNCED THAT THE LEADERSHIP WILL PAY LAST RESPECTS TO CHOU'S REMAINS ON JANUARY 10 AND 11, MOURNING CEREMONIES (FOR FOREIGNERS AND REPRESENTATIVES OF THE MASSES) WILL BE HELD ON JANUARY 12, 13, AND 14, WITH A FINAL MEMORIAL SERVICE ON JANUARY 15, THE NATIONAL DAY OF MOURNING. RED FLAG LIMOUSINES HAVE BEEN CARRYING CHINESE LEADERS TO THE HOSPITAL ALL DAY TODAY TO VIEW THE REMAINS. THE FUNERAL COMMITTEE HAS ALSO FIRMLY REFUSED TO ALLOW ANY FOREIGN DELEGATIONS TO COME TO PEKING FOR THE FUNERAL DESPITE STRONG PRESSURE FROM MANY FOREIGN FRIENDS AND GOVERNMENTS TO DO SO. APPARENTLY, THE CHINESE WERE UNWILLING TO TROUBLE WITH SUCH AN EXTRANEOUS MASS DESCENDING ON PEKING NOW OR TO HAVE DISRUPTIVE DISPUTES OVER WHO WOULD ATTEND DETRACT FROM THE SOLEMNITY OF THE OCCASION. THE OTHER ARRANGEMENTS ALSO SEEM DESIGNED TO ENSURE THAT ANY PUBLIC EXPRESSIONS OF SORROW BY THE MASSES IN PEKING WILL BE RESTRICTED TO ORDERLY FILING PAST THE ASHES IN ORGANIZED GROUPS.

3. THE FIRST PART OF JANUARY 10 PEOPLE'S DAILY (WHICH ARRIVED SIX HOURS LATE) CARRIED THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE FUNERAL ARRANGEMENTS AND MESSAGES OF CONDOLENCE FROM ALBANIA, NORTH KOREA, VIETNAM, AND ROMANIA. PAGES FOUR AND SIX ARE ALSO COMPLETELY DEVOTED TO CONDOLENCE MESSAGES FROM FOREIGN DIGNITARIES. THIS MATERIAL ALSO DOMINATES PRC RADIO BROADCASTS.

THAYER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: PUBLIC ATTITUDES, DEATHS, POLITICAL LEADERS, STATE FUNERALS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 10 JAN 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: coburnhl
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976PEKING00062
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760009-1134
From: PEKING
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760169/aaaacivq.tel
Line Count: 89
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: coburnhl
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 MAY 2004 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <31 AUG 2004 by coburnhl>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CHOU EN-LAI'S DEATH: PEKING ATMOSPHERICS
TAGS: PINT, CH, (CHOU EN-LAI)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006